



***United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**U.S. ANNOUNCES GUILTY PLEA  
IN LARGE AND SOPHISTICATED IDENTITY THEFT RING**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that LANRE ELEKEDE, a/k/a "getting2k@yahoo.com," a/k/a "getting2k@hotmail.com," pleaded guilty in Manhattan Federal Court earlier today to his participation in a sophisticated scheme to steal the identities of hundreds of people, and then use those stolen identities to commit fraud. ELEKEDE is the lead defendant in the prosecution of a large identity theft ring which was engaged in, among other things, stealing individual victims' personal identity information, sharing that information over the Internet with other members of the identity ring, and using the information to commit various forms of fraud. By pleading guilty, ELEKEDE avoided trial which had been scheduled to commence on July 17, 2006 before United States District Judge RICHARD M. BERMAN.

According to the Complaint, the evidence against ELEKEDE, included a large number of e-mails between members of a sophisticated identity theft ring. Among other things, members of the ring exchanged numerous credit card numbers, expiration dates and three-digit codes, which they typically referred to as "ike" or "ikes." The e-mails also included the personal identity information of a large number of individual victims (which they typically referred to as "infos"), including victims' names, addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers (referred to as "sola sola"), and mother's maiden names ("mama name"). As detailed in the Complaint, ELEKEDE and his co-conspirators then used the stolen credit card numbers and identity information to commit various forms of fraud, including using the credit card numbers to make purchases over the Internet.

As disclosed today in Court during ELEKEDE's guilty plea hearing, the investigation revealed that a common thread linking a number of the victims whose identities were compromised was that they had engaged in sports-related gambling over the

Internet with a Costa Rica-based web site known as BetOnSports.com. A number of the victims had submitted forms to BetOnSports detailing, among other things, their names, addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers, mother's maiden names and credit card numbers.

ELEKEDE, 32, is a native of Nigeria and, until his arrest, lived in Miami, Florida, and Chicago, Illinois. ELEKEDE pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment. ELEKEDE is scheduled to be sentenced on October 18, 2006, at 2:00 p.m.

ELEKEDE's co-defendant, ABIODUN WAHAB, previously pleaded guilty on May 19, 2006.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and thanked the United States Secret Service and the Miami-Dade Florida Police Department for their assistance in the investigation. Mr. GARCIA also stated that the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorney MARCUS A. ASNER is in charge of the prosecution.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York is committed to protecting the rights of crime victims. If you are a victim of an offense being prosecuted by the Office, log onto <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nys/victimwitness.html> or contact Wendy Olsen Clancy at (866) 874-8900 or [Wendy.Olsen@usdoj.gov](mailto:Wendy.Olsen@usdoj.gov)